

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Richard Allison on 11/20/2007.

The application has been amended as follows:

Paragraph [0049] has been replaced with the following paragraph to indicate the correct application serial numbers.

- **[0049]** In general, the invention pertains to systems, methods, and devices relating to delivering a sling to an anatomical site in the body of a patient, for example, the periurethral tissues of the patient in the treatment of female urinary incontinence. More particularly, the invention is directed to various configurations of spacers for spacing away from the sling at least a portion of a sleeve that at least partially encloses the sling. By spacing a portion of the sleeve away from the sling, the spacers of the invention enable a medical operator to more easily cut the sleeve, without damaging the sling, so that the sleeve may be removed from a patient's body, while leaving the sling in place. Another feature of some spacer configurations of the invention is that the spacer acts to space a portion of

the sling away from patient tissue, for example, periurethral tissue. By spacing a portion of the sling away from the patient tissue, the spacer of the invention makes it easier for the medical operator to position the sling without traumatizing patient tissue that would otherwise rub against the sling during positioning. As a preliminary matter it should be noted that the various illustrative spacer configurations discussed in further detail below may be employed with any suitable sling/sleeve configuration. By way of example, the spacers of the invention may be employed with sleeves having one or more apertures. They may also be employed with sleeves having a generally unitary construction or alternatively, with sleeves formed from multiple discrete sections. Without limitation, exemplary sling/sleeve configurations that may be operable with illustrative embodiments of the invention may be found in U.S. patent application entitled Medical Slings, to Rao et al, Ser. No.: 10/641,470, pending; U.S. patent application entitled Medical Slings, to Chu, Ser. No.: 10/641,192, pending; U.S. provisional patent application entitled Surgical Slings, to Li et al, Ser. No.: 60/495,439, pending; U.S. patent applications entitled Systems, Methods and Devices relating to Delivery of Medical Implants, to Chu et al., Ser. Nos.: 10/642,395, pending, 10/642,397, abandoned, 10/642,365, pending, and 10/641,487, pending; U.S. patent application entitled Medical Implant, to Chu et al., Ser. No.: 10/640,838, pending; U.S. provisional patent application serial No. 60/403,555; U.S. provisional patent application serial No. 60/465,722; U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/460,112, now U.S. Patent 7,070,558; and U.S.

patent application Ser. No. 09/096,983, now U.S. Patent 6,100,821, the entire contents of which are incorporated herein by reference.--

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Samuel G. Gilbert whose telephone number is 571-272-4725. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 6:30-4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Charles Marmor II can be reached on 571-272-4730. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Samuel G. Gilbert/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3735

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